

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-01

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO USMISSION GENEVA

SECSTATE WASHDC 1426

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 8584

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CVIS UR SREF

SUBJECT: ARMENIAN REFUGEES EX-USSR

FOR EUR/SOV, SCA/VO, ROME FOR INS

REF: (A) GENEVA 4171, (B) BEIRUT 7250, (C) MOSCOW 200

OF 1/7/75 AND PREVIOUS (NOTAL), (D) STATE 17907

OF 1/25/75 (NOTAL)

1. DURING FIRST FIVE MONTHS OF 1975, EMBASSY PROCESSED
TOTAL OF 82 SOVIET ARMENIAN EMIGRANTS FOR TCP AT ROME AND
ISSUED 32 IVS TO SUCH EMIGRANTS, FOR TOTAL OF 114 SOVIET
ARMENIAN IMMIGRANTS DESTINED TO US. SOVIET ARMENIAN TCP
AND IV CASES TOGETHER TOTALED 185 IN 1973 AND 290 IN
1974. ETHNIC ARMENIANS ACCOUNTED FOR 24.4 PERCENT OF
TOTAL EMBASSY IV AND TCP CASES IN 1973 AND 28.5 PERCENT
IN 1974. OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF OTHER SOVIET EMIGRANTS
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PROCESSED BY EMBASSY HAVE BEEN ETHNICALLY JEWISH.

2. IN ADDITION, ARMENIANS AND OTHERS WITH SOVIET PERMISSION TO DEPART FOR WIDE VARIETY OF COUNTRIES OTHER THAN US CONTINUE TO PLEAD FOR EMBASSY ASSISTANCE IN IMMIGRATION TO US. WHILE EMBASSY HAS KEPT NO STATISTICAL RECORD OF SUCH APPROACHES ON EMIGRANTS' PART, VOLUME HAS SIGNIFICANTLY AND STEADILY INCREASED SINCE MID-1974. DURING WEEK OF JUNE 9, 1975, FOR EXAMPLE, TOTAL OF SIX ARMENIAN FAMILIES WITH EXIT PERMISSION FOR FRANCE, LEBANON, ARGENTINA AND ROMANIA COMMUNICATED WITH AND/OR APPEARED AT EMBASSY IN THIS REGARD. THESE EMIGRANTS UNDOUBTEDLY MAKE UP BULK OF NON-TCP CASES NOTED REFS. (A) AND (B).

3. PER INSTRUCTIONS CONTAINED IN REF. (D) EMBASSY HAS LIMITED ASSISTANCE IN THESE CASES TO STATEMENT THAT INS ROME WILL ACCEPT APPLICATIONS FROM SOVIET EMIGRANTS FOR US CONDITIONAL ENTRY PROVIDING APPLICANTS DEEMED ADMISSABLE UNDER INA BY INS. IN COURSE OF CONVERSATIONS WITH THESE EMIGRANTS, IT INEVITABLY EMERGES THAT ARMENIAN FAMILIES ARE FULLY AWARE IN ADVANCE OF BOTH BEIRUT (ANCH) AND ROME PROCESSING CENTERS. CLEAR PREFERENCE FOR ROME OVER BEIRUT AS APPLICATION SITE IS COMMON TO ALMOST ALL CASES. FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS PREFERENCE INCLUDE WIDELY HELD BELIEF THAT BEIRUT PROCESSING IS INVARIABLY LENGTHIER PROCEDURE THAN THAT IN ROME, AS WELL AS CONVICTION THAT LIVING CONDITIONS PROVIDED IN ROME ARE SUPERIOR TO THOSE IN BEIRUT. ADDITIONAL FACTOR CITED IN MOST RECENT CASES IS PHYSICAL DANGER ARISING FROM POLITICAL STRIFE IN LEBANON.

4. PRIME MOTIVE IN THESE EMIGRANTS' APPROACHES TO EMBASSY IS DESIRE FOR INCLUSION IN TCP (ROME) PROGRAM. EMBASSY EXPLANATION OF REASONS FOR INABILITY TO ACCEPT SUCH CASES FOR TCP INVARIABLY EVOKES EXTREME CHAGRIN ON EMIGRANTS' PART, DESPITE THEIR AWARENESS OF FACT THAT WITH EASY-TO-OBTAIN ITALIAN VISA OR, IN SOME CASES, LESS READILY AVAILABLE LEBANESE VISA, THEIR EVENTUAL PROCESSING FOR US ENTRY IS REASONABLY CONFIDENTIAL

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ASSURD. WITH SIGNIFICANT EXCEPTION OF SUB-CATEGORY OF SUCH EMIGRANTS TO BE DISCUSSED BELOW. EMBASSY ASCRIBES CHAGRIN ON THEIR PART TO TWO MAIN CAUSES. FIRST, DESPITE WORLD-WIDE ARMENIAN DIASPORA AND FACT THAT EMIGRANTS' CLOSEST RELATIVES MAY RESIDE OUTSIDE US, SOVIET ARMENIAN COMMUNITY APPEARS INTENT ON EMIGRATION TO US FIRST AND FOREMOST (CF. PARA 1, REF A). EMBASSY'S REFUSAL TO PROCESS THESE CASES

FOR TCP THUS INCREASES EMIGRANTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL ANXIETY THAT UNKNOWN CIRCUMSTANCE OUTSIDE USSR WILL INTERVENE TO PREVENT EVENTUAL EMIGRATION TO US.

SECOND, SOVIET REGULATIONS PROHIBIT PURCHASE FOR RUBLES OF AIR TICKET TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES UNLESS TRAVELLER'S DOCUMENT IS FIRST VISAED BY EMBASSY OF GIVEN COUNTRY. THUS EVEN FAMILIES CONFIDENT THAT BEIRUT OR ROME ROUTE WILL LEAD TO US COMPLAIN RE EVENTUAL FINANCIAL HARDSHIP ARISING FROM NECESSITY TO PAY FOR ROME-US OR BEIRUT-US PORTION OF JOURNEY (FOR OFTEN LARGE FAMILIES) IN HARD CURRENCY.

5. SUB-CATEGORY OF USCH EMIGRANTS, HOWEVER, FACES FAR MORE SERIOUS PROBLEMS. AS NOTED REF. (B) AND PREVIOUS, SOVIET AUTHORITIES GRANT SOVIET CITIZENS PERMISSION TO DEPART USSR ONLY WITH CLEAR DESIGNATION OF EMIGRANTS' ULTIMATE DESTINATION ENSCRIBED IN TRAVEL DOCUMENTS. AS COUNTERPART OF THIS REGULATION, AUTHORITIES REQUIRE EMIGRANTS OBTAIN VISA OF DESTINATION-COUNTRY BEFORE EMIGRANTS' DEPARTURE FROM USSR IS PERMITTED. FYI: COUNTRY OF DESIGNATED DESTINATION IS DETERMINED BY RESIDENCE OF "RELATIVE" WHO FORMALLY "INVITED" EMIGRANT TO JOIN HIM, AND ALL KNOWN ATTEMPTS BY EMIGRANTS TO HAVE COUNTRY OF DESTINATION ALTERED AFTER EXIT PERMISSION IS RECEIVED HAVE PROVEN FRUITLESS. END FYI.

6. GENUINE DIFFICULTY ARISES, THEREFORE, WHEN COUNTRY OF DESTINATION REFUSES TO VISA TRAVEL DOCUMENTS OF THESE EMIGRANTS, EFFECTIVELY PREVENTING THEIR DEPARTURE FROM USSR. TO EMBASSY KNOWLEDGE, MOST WIDESPREAD HAVOC WREAKED IN THESE CASES HAS CONFIDENTIAL

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RESULTED FROM CONSISTENT FRENCH REFUSAL (DATING TO AT LEAST AUTUMN, 1974) TO ISSUE EVEN 24-HOUR TRANSIT VISAS TO EMIGRANTS WITH DESTINATION DESIGNATED AS FRANCE. FYI: EMIGRANTS IN THESE "FRENCH REFUSAL" CASES INVARIBLY CALL REPEATEDLY AT EMBASSY TO PLEAD THEIR CASES IN DRAMATIC TERMS, AND HAVE RECENTLY BEGUN TO COMPRISE SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN CONSULAR WORKLOAD. END FYI. LEBANESE AND GREEK EMBASSIES ISSUE NECESSARY VISAS MORE READILY, ALTHOUGH WITH CONSIDERABLE DELAY IN SOME CASES. EMBASSY HAS NOT ENCOUNTERED CASES OF SERIOUS DIFFICULTY WITH RESPECT TO VISA ISSUANCE BY EMBASSIES OF OTHER COUNTRIES COMMONLY DESIGNATED AS OSTENSIBLE DESTINATIONS. STOESEL

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